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09/804,246	03/13/2001	Yasuhide Matsumoto	1573.1003	9130

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EXAMINER	
KLINGER, SCOTT M	

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2153	4

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

PR4

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/804,246	MATSUMOTO ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Scott M. Klinger	2153	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *13 March 2001*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-30* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☒ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date *3*.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-30 are pending.

Priority

A claim for foreign priority has been made. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file. The effective filing date for subject matter in the application is 21 August 2000.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

> A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –
>
> (e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 7-9, 11-13, 16-18, 20, 21, 23, 24, and 26-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Okada et al. (U.S. Patent Number 6,393,461, hereinafter "Okada"). Okada discloses a communication management system for a chat system. Okada shows,

In referring to claim 1,

- A plurality of terminal devices forming a network:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network

- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices
- Table means for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said virtual communications spaces:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said character trains are used as said message sender identifying information:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows character-trains associated with the users of the chat system

In referring to claim 4,

- Said terminal devices use said table means in common:

 A system in which the users have the character-train information displayed on their individual terminals (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies said terminal devices using said table means in common

In referring to claim 5,

- The character-train information stored in said table means is accessible from said respective terminal devices:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the character-train information stored in said table means is accessible from said respective terminal devices

In referring to claim 7,

- Said network is formed of said plurality of terminal devices and a server:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130**, and a server **141** forming a network
- Character-train information to be stored in said table means is set in said server:
 A chat server that receives messages from users associated with character-train information inherently implies storing said character-train information on said chat server

In referring to claim 8,

- Said message sender identifier is converted into the character-train information at the terminal device, which has received the message:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the character-train information is displayed on the terminal devices which inherently implies that the user identifier information is converted on the terminal device

In referring claim 9,

- A server:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a chat server **141**
- A plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network with said server **141**
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:

Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices

- A table disposed in said server for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users

- Search means disposed in said server for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when said server receives said identifier and a message from said message sender, for transferring said character-train information together with said message:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 11,

- Said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent

- Said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users

- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring claim 12,

- A server:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a chat server **141**
- A plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network with said server **141**
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices
- A table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices:
 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device receives said identifier and a message from said message sender, so that the character-train information is displayed together with the received message on said display means of said terminal device:
 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring claim 13,

- A server:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a chat server **141**
- A plurality of terminal devices forming a network with said server:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network with said server **141**
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices
- A table disposed in each of said terminal devices for storing therein identifiers and corresponding character-train information of persons using said terminal devices

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Search means disposed in each of said terminal devices for searching said table for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a message sender when the terminal device transmits said identifier so that the character-train information is transmitted together with the message:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 16,

- Said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 17,

- Said sender identifiers with messages are transmitted with receivers of said messages designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said table has stored therein said identifiers and corresponding character-train information for respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring claim 18,

- A plurality of terminal devices form with a server a network:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** and a server **141** forming a network
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices
- Said record medium including table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and corresponding character-train information:
 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said record medium including search means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of a person who is going to send a message and outputting the character-train information sought, as said message sender identifying information, for transmission with said message:
 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 20,

- The identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring claim 21,

- A plurality of terminal devices form a network:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices

- Said record medium including table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and corresponding character-train information:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said record medium including search means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender received through the virtual communication spaces and outputting the character-train information, as said message sender identifying information, for display on said display means:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 23,

- The identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring claim 24,

- Said server forms a network with a plurality of terminal devices:
 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** and a server **141** forming a network
- Said server being adapted to allow said plurality of terminal devices to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who send the messages:
 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices
- Said record medium including table means for storing therein identifiers of persons who use the chat system and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers:
 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said record medium including converting means for searching said table means for character-train information corresponding to the identifier of the message sender sent together with a message by any of said terminal devices and outputting the character-train information for sending it together with said message to a given virtual communication space:
 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 26,

- The identifier and a message of a message sender are transmitted with receivers of said message designated:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said table means has stored therein said identifiers and character-train information corresponding to said identifiers to be used in relation to respective message receivers:

 A table means for storing identifiers and corresponding character-train information of users is inherently implied in a chat system that has character-train information associated with users
- Said search means searches for the character-train information corresponding to the message sender and the message receiver:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 27,

- A plurality of terminal devices forming a network:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** forming a network
- Said terminal devices being adapted to transmit and receive messages to and from each other through any of a plurality of virtual communication spaces configured on the network:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the terminals transmit and receive messages to and from each other
- The messages transmitted and received being displayed on display means of each terminal device together with message sender identifying information of persons who sends the messages:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the display of the terminal devices

- A memory having stored therein messages in association with identifiers of persons using said terminal devices:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows messages in association with identifiers of persons using said terminal devices which inherently implies a memory to store said messages
- Converting means for converting a designated one of said identifiers stored in said memory to a predetermined character train and causing said display means to display the character train:

 A means for converting an identifier to character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

In referring to claim 28,

- Said network comprises a plurality of terminal devices and one server, and said memory is provided in said server:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows a plurality of terminal devices **110**, **120**, and **130** and a server **141** forming a network. A computer **140** that runs a chat server **141** inherently implies memory

In referring to claim 29,

- Said memory is provided in each of said terminal devices:

 Okada, Figure 2 shows the chat clients **110a**, **120b**, and **130c** run on computers **110**, **120**, and **130**, which inherently imply memory

In referring to claim 30,

- Said converting means is provided in each of said terminal devices:

 Okada, Figure 7 shows the character-train information is displayed on the terminal devices which inherently implies that the user identifier information is converted on the terminal device

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

> (a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 19, 22, and 25 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada.

In referring to claim 2, although Okada shows substantial features of the claimed invention, including the system of claim 1 (see 102 rejection above), Okada does not explicitly show said table means contains different character-train information for the identifier of a same one person for use in different ones of said virtual communications spaces. Nonetheless this feature is well known in the art and would have been an obvious implementation of the system.

Okada, Figure 7 shows a chat system with chat client **110a** running on client computer **110**. It would be obvious to allow multiple instances of the chat client to run on the client computer and thereby causing the table to contain different character-train information for the identifier of a same one person for use in different ones of said virtual communications spaces, in order to allow the user to remain anonymous in a first chat channel while simultaneously using character-train information that identifies the user in a second chat channel.

In referring to claim 3, although Okada shows substantial features of the claimed invention, including the system of claim 1 (see 102 rejection above), Okada does not explicitly show said table means contains different character-train information for the identifier of a same person for use in communications with different persons. Nonetheless this feature is well known in the art and would have been an obvious implementation of the system.

Okada, Figure 7 shows a chat system with chat client **110a** running on client computer **110**. It would be obvious to allow multiple instances of the chat client to run on the client computer and thereby causing the table to contain different character-train information for the identifier of a same one person for use in communications with different persons, in order to allow the user to remain anonymous to a first person in a first chat channel while simultaneously using character-train information that identifies the user to a second person in a second chat channel.

In referring to claims 10, 14, 15, 19, 22, and 25, Okada shows substantial features of the claimed invention, including:

- The system of claims 9, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24, and 27 (see 102 rejections above)
- Said sender identifier and message are transmitted through a designated one of said virtual communication spaces:

 A chat system that sends messages to receivers in a specific channel (see Okada, Figure 7) inherently implies the receivers are designated when the message is initially sent
- Said search means searches said table for the character-train corresponding to the designated virtual communication space and sender identifier:

 A means for looking up character-train information associated with a user is inherently implied in a system that associates user information with character-train information with each user and displays said character-train information with a message

However, Okada does not explicitly show said table has stored therein different character-train information for the respective ones of said identifiers for use in different ones of said virtual communication spaces. Nonetheless this feature is well known in the art and would have been an obvious implementation of the system.

Okada, Figure 7 shows a chat system with chat client **110a** running on client computer **110**. It would be obvious to allow multiple instances of the chat client to run on the client computer and thereby causing the table to contain different character-train information for the identifier of a same one person for use in different ones of said virtual communications spaces, in order to

allow the user to remain anonymous in a first chat channel while simultaneously using character-train information that identifies the user in a second chat channel.

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okada in view of Moncreiff (U.S. Patent Number 5,828,839, hereinafter "Moncreiff"). Although Okada shows substantial features of the claimed invention including the system of claim 1 (see 102 rejection above), Okada is silent as to how user accounts are set up. Okada does not explicitly show character-train information to be stored in said table means is set through terminal devices from which said messages are transmitted. Nonetheless this feature is well known in the art and would have been an obvious implementation of the system disclosed by Okada as evidenced by Moncreiff.

In analogous art Moncreiff discloses a computer network chat room based on channel broadcast in real time. Moncreiff shows character-train information to be stored in said table means is set through terminal devices from which said messages are transmitted: Moncreiff, Figure 10 shows the setups screen for a new user which is used by a terminal device.

A person of ordinary skill in the art would have readily recognized the desirability and advantages of implementing the system of Okada so as to set the character train information through the terminal, as taught by Moncreiff, to allow the users of the chat system to conveniently and independently set up an account.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Scott M. Klinger whose telephone number is (703) 305-8285. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:00am - 3:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenn Burgess can be reached on (703) 305-4792. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Scott M. Klinger
Examiner
Art Unit 2153

smk

FRANTZ B. JEAN
PRIMARY EXAMINER